

Dr. Jane Henney, Commissioner
U S Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 1471
Rockville, MD 20857

27 JUN 1, 1999 JUN 14 P1:30

Dear Commissioner,

I am deeply concerned about the high-volume non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in the United States. My two main areas of concern are palliative use in humans (give them a pill so they go away happy even though the doctor knows the pill won't help) and preventive use in farm animals (reduce the chance of an epidemic among severely crowded and stressed live stock). If there were no danger, these uses might be acceptable. But there is known danger - the evolution of bacterial strains resistant to the antibiotics. This has occurred and will continue to occur even though we continue to find new antibiotics. For relatively small gain we are risking the return of medicine to the pre-penicillin age.

Your agency has the responsibility and authority to protect public health by controlling nonessential use of antibiotics.

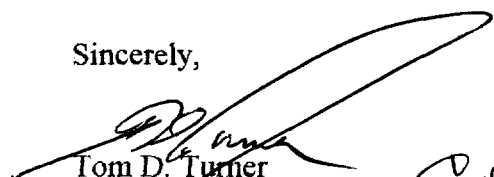
Palliative use in humans should be strongly discouraged through public education (general population), elementary school health education (indoctrinate children), medical education (indoctrinate doctors), and monitoring total annual use. If a doctor feels obliged to "prescribe something," make it a placebo and tell the patient this won't help medically but it might make you think you're getting some treatment. At least that would be honest, and probably cost less, than a prescription the doctor knows is not effective (e.g., antibiotics for a cold virus).

Preventive use in humans should be limited to cases where a specific risk or exposure is believed to exist and early use of the selected antibiotic is known to be helpful.

Preventive use in domestic animals (both pets and livestock) should be completely prohibited. It just enriches the factory farming industry at the expense of the public. It's nice to have cheaper meat in the supermarket but there is a price - antibiotic resistant strains. The agribusiness lobby doesn't seem to care about our health, just their bottom line.

It is a valid function of government to protect public health. Please use your influence to eliminate all non-essential use of antibiotics.

Sincerely,


Tom D. Turner
40 Friendship Street
Newport, RI 02840-2252

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TOM D. TURNER
40 Friendship Street
Newport, RI 02840-2252



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